

Resources for Addressing Substance Misuse During Pregnancy and Handouts for Families



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Early Childhood Health and Wellness

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Resource List by Topic

Alcohol Use During Pregnancy

- Center for Disease Control (CDC): “Alcohol Use in Pregnancy”
www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/fasd/alcohol-use.html
- March of Dimes: “Alcohol During Pregnancy”
<https://www.marchofdimes.org/pregnancy/alcohol-during-pregnancy.aspx>

Child Welfare Resources

- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) - Office on Child Abuse and Neglect, Child Welfare Information Gateway: *Parental Drug Use as Child Abuse*
www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/drugexposed.pdf
- HHS - Office on Child Abuse and Neglect: *Protecting Children in Families Affected by Substance Misuse Disorders*
www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/substanceuse.pdf

Clinical Support for Home Visitors

- Providers’ Clinical Support System for Medication Assisted Treatment: <http://pcssmat.org> (Note: This resource includes free clinical coaching for all health care professionals, including a discussion forum and a matching service with various addiction specialists.)
- Providers’ Clinical Support System for Opioid Therapies: <http://pcss-o.org>

Drug Use During Pregnancy

- March of Dimes: “Street Drugs and Pregnancy”
www.marchofdimes.org/pregnancy/street-drugs-and-pregnancy.aspx
- National Institute on Drug Control (NIDA): “Substance Misuse While Pregnant and Breastfeeding”
<https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/research-reports/substance-use-in-women/substance-use-while-pregnant-breastfeeding>
- NIDA: “What Are The Unique Needs of Pregnant Women with Substance Abuse Disorder?”
<https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/principles-drug-addiction-treatment-research-based-guide-second-edition/frequently-asked-questions/what-are-unique-needs-pregnant-women>

- NIDA: “Women and Drugs”
<https://www.drugabuse.gov/related-topics/women-drugs>

Marijuana Use During Pregnancy

- The American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology (ACOG): “Marijuana Use During Pregnancy and Lactation”
www.acog.org/Resources-And-Publications/Committee-Opinions/Committee-on-Obstetric-Practice/Marijuana-Use-During-Pregnancy-and-Lactation
- March of Dimes: “Marijuana and Pregnancy”
www.marchofdimes.org/pregnancy/marijuana.aspx

Methamphetamine Use During Pregnancy

- ACOG: “Methamphetamine Abuse in Women of Reproductive Age”
www.acog.org/Resources-And-Publications/Committee-Opinions/Committee-on-Health-Care-for-Underserved-Women/Methamphetamine-Abuse-in-Women-of-Reproductive-Age
- National Institutes of Health (NIH): “What Are the Risks of Methamphetamine Abuse During Pregnancy?”
www.drugabuse.gov/publications/research-reports/methamphetamine/what-are-risks-methamphetamine-abuse-during-pregnancy

Opioid Use During Pregnancy

- ACOG: “Opioid Abuse, Dependence, and Addiction in Pregnancy”
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22525931>
- CDC: *Pregnancy and Opioid Pain Medications*
www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/pdf/pregnancy/opioid_pain_factsheet-a.pdf
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA): *A Collaborative Approach to the Treatment of Pregnant Women with Opioid Use Disorders*
https://ncsacw.samhsa.gov/files/CollaborativeApproach_508.pdf
- SAMHSA: “New Efforts to Combat Opioid Epidemic”
<https://newsletter.samhsa.gov/2016/07/10/new-efforts-combat-opioid-epidemic/>

Substance Misuse Disorders and Mental Health

- Mental Health America: “Co-occurring Disorders”
www.mentalhealthamerica.net/conditions/co-occurring-disorders
- SAMHSA: “Co-occurring Disorders”
www.samhsa.gov/disorders/co-occurring

Tobacco Use During Pregnancy

- Be Tobacco Free: “Tobacco Use and Pregnancy”
<https://betobaccofree.hhs.gov/health-effects/pregnancy/index.html>
- CDC: “Tobacco Use and Pregnancy”
www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/maternalinfanthealth/tobaccousepregnancy/index.htm



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Eliminating Substance Misuse During Pregnancy

According to the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology, one out of 20 women uses inappropriate drugs (sometimes called “street drugs”) during pregnancy.

Substance Misuse: The inappropriate use of alcohol or drugs, whether the substances are legal or illegal. This includes: 1) using a prescription medication without a prescription for it; 2) using a medication prescribed for someone else; or 3) using a prescribed medication in greater amounts, more often, or longer than prescribed.

Avoiding substance misuse while pregnant can help keep you and your baby safe. If you are misusing any substances, including prescription medications, talk with your health care provider immediately for guidance or treatment to help you quit and keep your baby as safe as possible. Common inappropriate drugs (sometimes called “street drugs”) are never safe during pregnancy! They include

- Cocaine
- Ecstasy
- Methamphetamine
- Heroin
- Marijuana

These drugs can cause problems for your baby during pregnancy, including

- Preterm labor and preterm birth
- Problems with your placenta
- Miscarriage
- Stillbirth
- Low birthweight
- Heart problems and other birth defects

Babies whose moms have used inappropriate drugs also often have challenges during infancy and later in life. These can include

- Sudden infant death syndrome
- Growth that is slower than normal
- Learning problems
- Behavior problems

The Bottom Line

Misusing any substances during pregnancy can be harmful to you and your baby. Help is available. Talk with your doctor if you are on any prescription drugs during your pregnancy. Ask whether your prescription is safe to take while you are pregnant or breastfeeding. If you, a friend, or a family member needs help with substance misuse, contact a professional at one of the following numbers:

- SAMHSA’s National Helpline (also known as the Treatment referral routing service): 1-800-662 (HELP)
- Treatment facility locator: 1-800-662-4357
- National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence Hope Line: 1-800-622-2255

Eliminating substance misuse can put your baby on the right path for a healthy life.



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Opioid Misuse During Pregnancy

Prescription opioids are medicines used to relieve pain after surgery or caused by an injury. They include several medications that may sound familiar: codeine, oxycodone (or “oxy”), hydrocodone, morphine, and fentanyl. Opioids are highly addictive. Sometimes people who are addicted to prescription opioids move on to heroin, which is also an opioid.

- Make sure any doctor you see during pregnancy knows that you are pregnant. Always ask your doctor, “Is this medication safe to take while I’m pregnant?”
- Take any medication that your doctor prescribes exactly how he or she tells you to, and don’t take medication with someone else’s name on it. Ask your doctor about risks to your baby.
- If you’re using opioids, talk with your health care professional immediately. Never stop taking an opioid before talking with your health care professional first. Quitting opioids cold turkey can cause serious problems for baby. There are specific strategies for helping pregnant women quit opioid use, so it’s important to seek help from your health care professional when you are ready to make this change. Medications are available that can help reduce addiction to opioids but that are safe to take during pregnancy, such as methadone.

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Misusing opioids during pregnancy can cause serious problems for baby at birth, during infancy, and sometimes even later in life. These can include

- Poor fetal growth and low birth weight
- Preterm birth.
- Stillbirth.
- Neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS). A baby with NAS is born with drug withdrawal



symptoms that can cause serious problems such as difficulty breathing, feeding problems, and Cognitive (or thinking) and motor (or physical) delays in development through childhood.

The Bottom Line

- Misusing any substances during pregnancy (inappropriate drugs or prescription drugs used incorrectly) can be harmful to you and your baby. Help is available. If you, a friend, or a family member needs help with drug use, contact a professional at one of the following numbers:
- SAMHSA’s National Helpline (also known as the Treatment Referral Routing Service): 1-800-662HELP
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